

THRU : Chief, Stock Management and Cataloging Branch  
: Chief, Supply Division, Office of Logistics  
Chief, Records Management Staff

5 May 1961

Adding File Folders to Stock Catalog

1. I'd like to thank your office for your comments of 8 March 1961 proposing changes to  Standardization and Use of Filing Equipment and Supplies. I understand your proposals to be:

- a. Stock multiple cut legal size folders.
- b. Stock pressboard folders with angular celluloid tabs.

2. Unfortunately, the initial cost of file folders which you mention is not the main consideration. We find some items with low initial costs to be too expensive in use and some expensive items that prove to be a real economy throughout their useful life. This is especially true in files operations. Waste of supplies and personnel time are very important factors. Inefficient file operations is even a more-important consideration.

3. On the multiple cut folders you mention, we are told by the National Archives and Records Service that years ago it was considered efficient to have folder labels zig-zag back and forth across the file drawer. The main concern was a label not hidden by another folder. Unfortunately search time is increased not decreased in such files and the zig-zag is soon distorted as folders are added within an active growing file. Refiling of folders takes more time. The Hoover Commission and the National Archives and Records Service have surveyed this problem and concluded the multiple cut folders cost the Government much more than do the square cut folders and our Agency standardized its folder supplies based on those findings.

4. We have discouraged all use of pressboard folders unless complete justification is received explaining a special and unusual need. The handbook details how this is to be done and how the office Records Officer is to study the need before approving such special requests. For efficient office files the file must be broken annually, separated, and retired or destroyed. Pressboard folders are several times more costly than Kraft folders and the heavy folder tempts offices to neglect annual file separations. This in turn boosts supply costs while lessening office efficiency. The

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celloloid tab you mention has the added disadvantage of breaking and soon being as dangerous as several razor blades standing on edge in the file. This celloloid tab also requires a special insert for the tab rather than the one tab now standard. We have urged many offices to stop using these folders and hope someday to convince those few offices who have not yet realized the added cost put on the Agency by their continued use.

5. The mere existence of specialty type filing supplies in the GSA Catalog is no endorsement nor encouragement for their universal use. We will continue to discourage their use and educate responsible officials and files personnel of their disadvantages. I hope you will help us and the Agency in this effort.



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1 - RMS File

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